

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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R 111011Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1762

INFO AMCONSUL MEDAN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 4472

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ID

SUBJ: PUBLISHING PERMITS OF "PEDOMAN" AND

"EKSPRES" REVOKED

REFS: A) JAKARTA 0920 B) JAKARTA 1011 C) JAKARTA 1929

D) JAKARTA 2096

1. SUMMARY: GOI HAS REVOKED PUBLISHING PERMITS OF DAILY "PEDOMAN" AND WEEKLY MAGAZINE "EKSPRES," THUS FORECLOSING POSSIBILITY THESE JOURNALS, WHICH WERE SHUT DOWN AFTER JANUARY RIOTS, WILL BE PUBLISHED AGAIN. THIS BRINGS TOTAL OF PUBLICATIONS BANNED IN POST-RIOT PRESS CRACKDOWN TO TWELVE. DECISION TO BAN "EKSPRES", WHICH WAS CONTROLLED BY EX-PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANT ALI MURTOPO, IS SIGN OF DECLINE IN MURTOPO'S INFLUENCE. FOLLOWING BASED ON PRESS ACCOUNTS APRIL 10. END SUMMARY.

2. DECISION TO REVOKE PUBLISHING PERMITS OF "PEDOMAN" AND "EKSPRES" WAS MADE BY NATIONAL POLITICAL AND SECURITY STABILIZATION COUNCIL APRIL 9 AND ANNOUNCED BY MINISTER OF INFORMATION MASHURI APRIL 10. MASHURI TOLD PRESS GOVERNMENT DELAYED REVOCATION PUBLISHING PERMITS FOR THREE MONTHS FOLLOWING JAN 24 WITHDRAWAL OF PRINTING
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PERMITS (REF B) (WHICH REPRESENTED ONLY TEMPORARY SUSPENSION

OF RIGHT TO PUBLISH) TO CONSIDER MATTER CAREFULLY AND AVOID CHARGES IT WAS ACTING "RASHLY". HE GAVE NO REASON FOR DECISION EXCEPT THAT IT WAS RELATED TO JANUARY EVENTS.

3. MASHURI ADDED THAT WITH FINAL CLOSURE THESE TWO JOURNALS, TOTAL OF TWELVE PUBLICATIONS IN JAKARTA AND REGIONS HAVE BEEN BANNED SINCE JANUARY 15, PUTTING 417 EMPLOYEES FROM JAKARTA, AND 85 FROM THE REGIONS OUT OF WORK (REFS A, C).

4. ACCORDING TO MINISTRY INFORMATION SOURCE, GOI HAS DECIDED NOT TO PERMIT PUBLICATION OF A NEW ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY IN PLACE OF BANNED "JAKARTA TIMES," CONTRARY TO MASHURI'S FEB 15 STATEMENT THAT NEW ENGLISH LANGUAGE PAPER WOULD BE ALLOWED (REF D).

5. COMMENT: REAL REASONS FOR PERMANENT BAN OF "PEDOMAN", WHOSE EDITORIALS WERE MIDDLE-OF-THE-ROAD, ARE PROBABLY ITS OLD ASSOCIATION WITH PSI (FORMER SOCIALIST PARTY) AND REPORT IN JANUARY ABOUT STUDENT QUERIES TO PRESIDENT ABOUT MRS. SUHARTO'S BUSINESS ACTIVITIES WHICH ANGERED SUHARTO. PERTAMINA CHIEF IBNU SUTOWO REPORTEDLY WITHDREW HIS FINANCIAL BACKING FROM "PEDOMAN" AFTER IT BECAME POLITICAL HOT POTATO, WISHING TO AVOID INVOLVEMENT IN CONTROVERSY, AND BAN OF "PEDOMAN" IS NOT REGARDED AS SLAP AT IBNU. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE DECISION - IN WHICH SUHARTO MOST CERTAINLY CONCURRED - TO KILL "EKSPRES", A POLITICAL ORGAN OF EX-ASPRI ALI MURTOPO, IS A BLOW TO MURTOPO AND A SIGN OF HIS DIMINISHED INFLUENCE IN GOI LEADERSHIP.
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